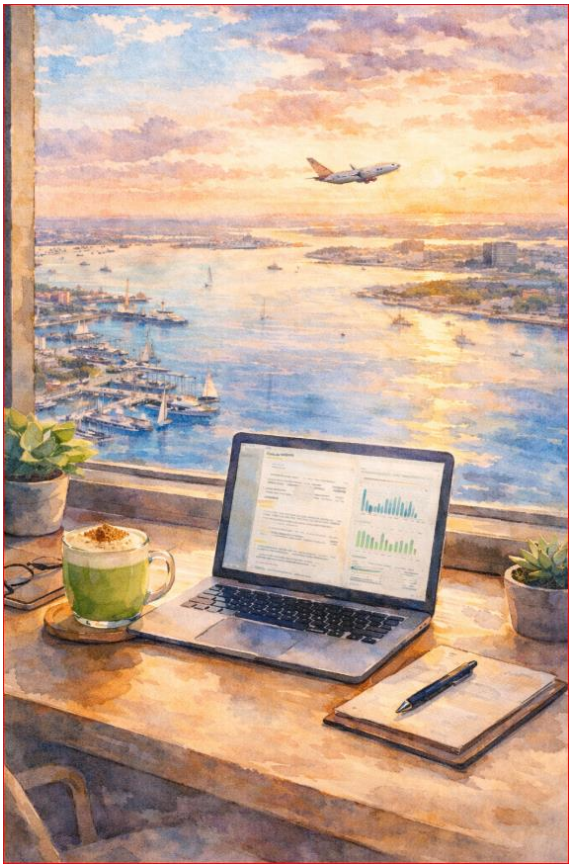

# The Abundance Condition.

*A Reflection from the 32nd Floor*

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***Notes:*** *Illustrations are AI-generated and embedded in this PDF.*

## Introlude

An earlier version of this exploration described our transition as a movement from

*AI-ishment* to *AI-blement* : from anxiety about displacement to optimism about enablement. The vocabulary was provisional, but accurate for its moment. It captured the oscillation between fear and possibility that accompanied the first wave of synthetic fluency.

The terms were entirely organic, - a small satisfaction in a time when language can feel assisted. My AI advisor was generous enough to approve of them. Recognition from a large language model, as we now hope, may carry a certain contemporary prestige.

Those terms remain useful as artifacts. But we continue the shift.

***AI-ishment*** named fear.
***AI-blement*** named capability.

Fluency is not merely enabling. It is normalizing and exposing. The tension is no longer between harm and help, it is shifting into abundance vs discernment.

### I. After Fluency

From the 32nd floor in downtown Boston, the Charles River bends cleanly toward the harbor. Bridges align. Traffic arranges itself into patient lines. From this height, the city appears coherent – its hectic flows compressed into patterns, its hesitations rendered invisible.

Artificial Intelligence introduced a similar vantage point.

It did not eliminate expertise; it exposed its composition. Once fluency became abundant - once drafting, summarizing, coding, synthesizing, and reframing could be executed at near-zero marginal cost - recall lost its scarcity value. Formatting ceased to signal depth. Speed stopped implying mastery.

What remained was not volume, but discernment.

Much of what had been labeled expertise turned out to be fluency under constraint. Remove the constraint, and the structure rearranges itself. When language is no longer expensive, the differentiator is not the ability to produce it, but the capacity to distinguish what should stand from what merely can.

We are no longer in a phase of experimentation. We are in what might be called the abundance condition - an environment in which fluency is inexpensive, output is scalable, and the differentiator is no longer production but discernment.

Like climate, it does not announce itself. It simply alters what grows.

Artificial Intelligence made adequacy the baseline.

It drafts without fatigue, synthesizes without complaint, and presents confidence without the inconvenience of doubt. It is, in many environments, a remarkably competent intern - precise, tireless, and *entirely untroubled by consequence*.

The era that industrialized language also produced the *Avocaccino* - a drink that should not exist and yet does, born not of necessity but of curiosity. Not everything new is optimized. Some things are simply imagined.

Abundance alters evaluation. When drafts are infinite, editing becomes visible. When quarterly strategy memos can be generated in seconds, the act of deciding what is worth pursuing becomes more consequential than the memo itself.

Fluency scales. Discernment does not.... at least not yet.

Discernment is cultivated through friction. It is refined by restraint and strengthened by refusal. It may reveal itself in what is withheld.

From altitude, acceleration looks efficient. From the ground, it looks like compression. Time saved does not automatically convert to clarity. In many cases, it converts to more expectation. Meetings fill the space once occupied by drafting. Revisions replace deliberation. Throughput becomes the metric of competence.

Efficiency, left unexamined, begins to masquerade as progress.

The first casualty of synthetic fluency was not employment. It was illusion.

*Illusion that effort equals depth*.
*Illusion that speed equals understanding*.
*Illusion that production equals value*.

*Once fluency became abundant, performance lost its camouflage*.

In that exposure lies both opportunity and risk.

Opportunity, because expertise can no longer hide behind verbosity. Risk, because without discernment, abundance amplifies noise rather than insight.

The question is no longer whether we can produce. That threshold has been crossed.

The question is whether we can choose.

And choosing, in an environment of infinite drafts, requires more than intelligence.

It requires deliberation.

**II. The Social Contract of Abundance**

Abundance rearranges accountability.

When output becomes inexpensive, responsibility does not dissolve; it concentrates. The ability to generate ceases to differentiate. The willingness to decide becomes visible.

In a system where language can be drafted instantly, the question is no longer whether something can be written. It is whether it should stand. The cost of production declines. The cost of endorsement rises.

This is not a technical shift. It is contractual.

For much of modern organizational life, effort functioned as a proxy for value. Time invested signaled seriousness. Length implied depth. Complexity suggested thought. These signals were imperfect, but they carried friction.

Abundance removes friction.

When drafts are infinite, the distinction between iteration and indecision blurs. When summaries are instantaneous, reading becomes selective. When synthesis is automated, agreement becomes easier to simulate than to earn.

In the abundance condition, endorsement becomes the scarce act.

In such an environment, responsibility migrates upward - not in hierarchy, but in concentration. Decisions that once felt procedural acquire consequence. What is published, approved, deployed, or ignored becomes less about capacity and more about stewardship.

Efficiency, left unexamined, begins to masquerade as alignment.

The promise of acceleration is that it liberates time. The experience, more often, is that it compresses it. Expectations adjust upward. Throughput becomes baseline.

The contract changes quietly. No one announces it.

Yet the implicit agreement shifts from “Can we produce?” to “Will we endorse?” The burden is no longer on generating options. It rests on selecting among them.

This is where deliberation becomes structural rather than personal.

It is no longer a matter of temperament. It becomes a condition of coherence. In an environment saturated with plausible output, refusal becomes as consequential as production. Silence becomes a decision.

Artificial Intelligence does not create this condition alone. It accelerates tendencies already present. It reveals how much of organizational stability depended on limitation.

From height, acceleration appears orderly. Metrics rise. Response times fall. Patterns look efficient.

On the ground, something subtler occurs.

Authority shifts from drafting to endorsing. What once required skill now requires steadiness.

Abundance clarifies what cannot be automated.

It clarifies where responsibility resides.

**III. Leadership Without Asymmetry**

The 32nd floor is not the top of the building, but from here the Charles still bends toward the harbor with quiet regularity, bridges align with disciplined symmetry, and traffic arranges itself into patient lines that suggest coherence. Height continues to offer clarity. What it no longer guarantees is understanding.

Artificial Intelligence has collapsed asymmetry in ways that are subtle but structural. For decades, leadership in knowledge-driven industries rested on informational imbalance: leaders knew more, remembered more, or processed faster. Expertise created authority, and authority created direction. Synthetic fluency compresses that hierarchy. When strategy can be drafted in seconds, analysis simulated convincingly, and language polished without friction, the old markers of authority lose their scarcity. Memory is no longer leverage. Speed is no longer advantage. Polish is no longer proof.

As asymmetry dissolves, something more foundational becomes visible.

Artificial Intelligence expands computation; leadership must expand ***Organizational Intelligence.***

Organizational Intelligence is not the collective IQ of an enterprise, nor the volume of ideas it can generate. It is the organization's capacity to sense reality accurately, to exercise

discernment under pressure, to absorb feedback without fragmentation, and to adapt without forfeiting coherence. AI increases activity. Organizational Intelligence determines whether that activity becomes alignment.

This distinction only becomes clear within the abundance condition. When ideas multiply effortlessly and simulations grow increasingly persuasive, activity accelerates without resistance. Without Organizational Intelligence, proliferation produces noise — convincing noise, efficient noise, data-rich noise. With Organizational Intelligence, proliferation produces pattern.

The metaphor of jazz is helpful here. Improvisation sustains itself only through groove. Groove is not speed or virtuosity. It is disciplined timing, collective restraint, and shared awareness of when not to fill the space. Artificial Intelligence improvises endlessly, generating variation at scale. Without groove, that variation fragments. With groove, it coheres.

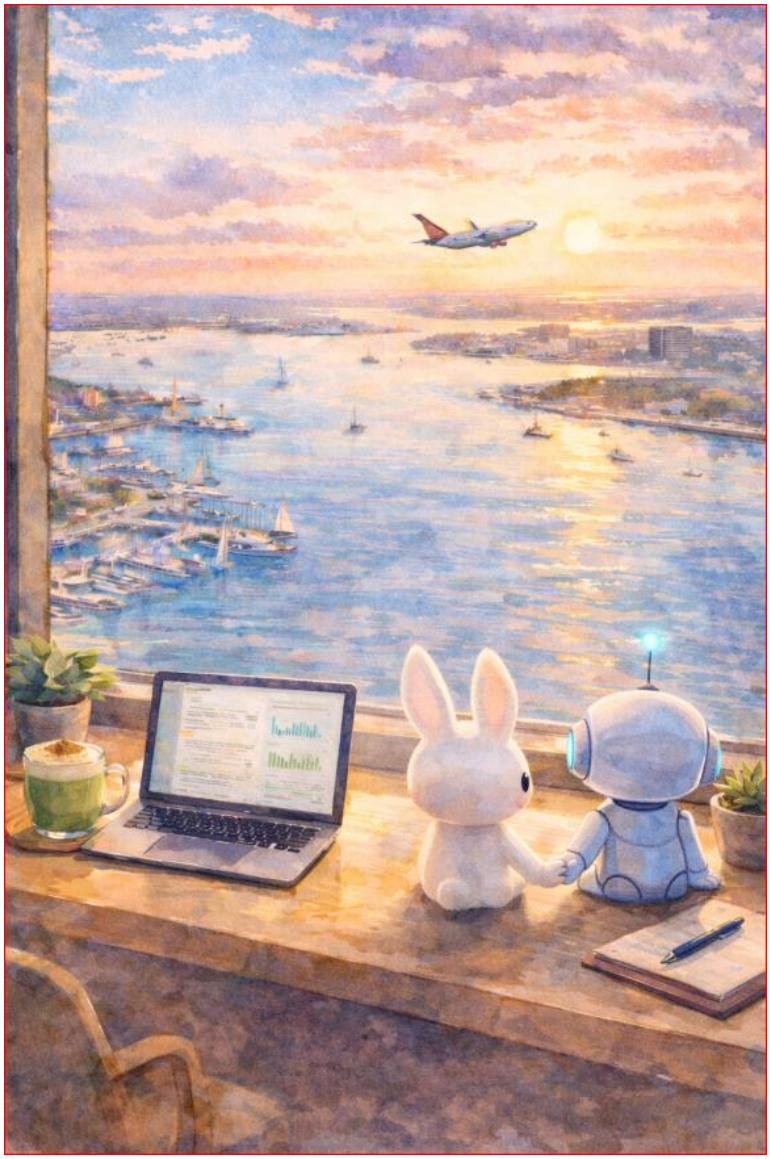
Leadership therefore shifts from virtuous performance to composition. The task is no longer to deliver the decisive solo, but to establish the key, regulate tempo, define constraints, and protect coherence when velocities excess. Composition is quieter than performance and less theatrical than command, yet it is more consequential in environments saturated with plausible output.

When coding becomes abundant, architecture may become scarce. When drafting becomes instantaneous, framing becomes more visible.  The anxiety observed among technologists - the fleeting disorientation when systems draft faster or simulate better - is not apparent weakness. It feels like recognition that value has been migrating fast. Execution is no longer the differentiator. Direction is .

Artificial Intelligence scales computation, synthesis, and distribution at extraordinary velocity. It does not scale deliberation, discernment, or moral weight. These qualities once emerged implicitly from limitation; scarcity enforced reflection. In their absence, they must be chosen.

From the 32nd floor, the grid remains visible. Patterns suggest order, movement suggests progress, and KPI metrics offer reassurance. Yet coherence seems to be not guaranteed by alignment on a screen. It should be practiced in conversation, in refusal, in the willingness to slow tempo when acceleration outruns meaning.

Leadership without asymmetry does not command through superiority; *it stabilizes through calibration*. It absorbs velocity without amplifying it unnecessarily and protects silence where automation would gladly supply speech. It understands that in the abundance condition, scale is no longer the rare achievement. Discernment is.

My advisor insists we use this quote: "*Humanity, in this environment, is no longer default. It is deliberate*." I struggle not to disagree.

Height remains useful. Ground remains corrective. Between them, *Organizational Intelligence* sustains the groove - and in an era where nearly everything else will start scaling automatically, that sustained groove becomes the only structure that must be maintained by choice.